

Welcome, and thank you all for being a part of this important discussion.

Before we start today, I would like to observe a moment of silence in honor of Tom Lantos, who was a member of this Subcommittee and Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Chairman Lantos was a human rights giant and one of the great public servants of this body. He will be missed.

Thank you. I can think of no better way to honor Chairman Lantos than by engaging the Congress and the public in today's important discussion.

This hearing marks our third in a series of hearings focused on long-term U.S. national security strategy more than six years after 9/11.

We are very fortunate today to have such a distinguished group of witnesses, whose work is on the cutting edge of understanding how best to deal with Al Qaeda and other terrorists going forward. Thank you, gentlemen, for being with us.

Since September 11, 2001, we have struggled to develop a coherent and effective national security strategy to defeat the global jihadist movement that is most closely symbolized by Al Qaeda. Notwithstanding the vast U.S. counterterrorism efforts since 9/11 – the lives lost and the vast amounts of money expended – our intelligence community recently reported on an alarming resurgence and strengthening of Al Qaeda.

The July 2007 National Intelligence Estimate stated very clearly that Al Qaeda had, and I quote, “protected or regenerated key elements of its Homeland attack capability, including: a safe haven in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (‘FATA’), operational lieutenants, and its top leadership.”

These troubling findings were reaffirmed just last week in congressional testimony by Mike McConnell, the Director of National Intelligence, and Gen. Michael Hayden, the Director of

Central Intelligence. According to Director McConnell, Al Qaeda is, and I quote, “gaining strength from its refuge in Pakistan and is steadily improving its ability to recruit, train and position operatives capable of carrying out attacks inside the United States.”

One of the most constructive roles this oversight subcommittee can play in this generational struggle is to continuously assess performance and strategy – and to explore emerging thinking and analysis – in combating international terrorists.

The Cold War called on us to bring to the fore our best innovators from every segment of society. This same effort has been lacking, unfortunately, post-9/11.

Over these last years, I have been critical of the Administration for its failure to fully engage the public – including our wealth of resources among academic researchers, international businesspeople, non-governmental organizations, educators, and technology leaders – in this vital effort.

Our country’s strength has always been characterized by our unique mix of optimism, pragmatism, creativity, work ethic, and true grit. That has led to our great engine of innovation. We now need to focus this ingenuity squarely to the task of defeating Al Qaeda and other terrorists.

Today, we will try to highlight some of the best of this emerging thinking and analysis.

First, unlike the Cold War, we do not face a threat posed by a competing super power. Instead, we are fighting loose networks of terrorist cells willing to fight unconventional warfare, including declaring open season on civilians. Today, based on documents captured on the battlefield, we will explore sophisticated analysis of the potential vulnerabilities of Al Qaeda’s networked organizational structure.

Second, Al Qaeda, its affiliates, and copycats thrive in environments with the absence of governance as well as sympathetic local populations. We have spent several hearings focused on this troubling phenomenon in Pakistan’s Tribal Areas. Today, we will more fully explore the

nature of these ungoverned spaces and the best ways to “drain those swamps.”

Third, Al Qaeda and other jihadists benefit from widespread anti-Western sentiment across the Muslim world. Despite increased resources on public diplomacy in the Muslim world, poll after poll continues to show abysmal levels of anti-American sentiment. Today, we will explore new approaches and thinking in how best to fight the war of ideas in the Muslim world.

I look forward to engaging in this enlightening, and overdue, discussion.